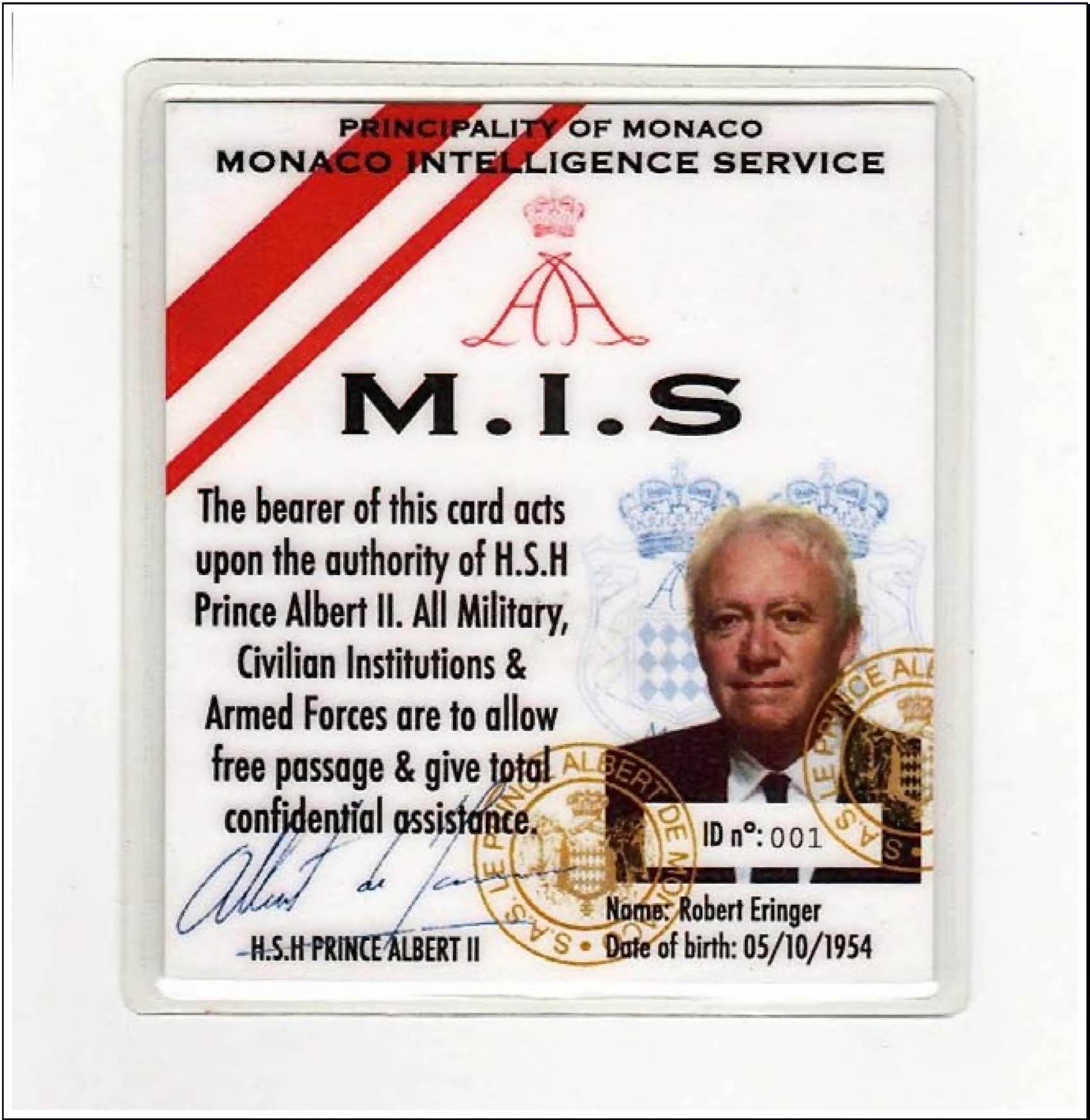


Saturday, September 13, 2014

THE PRINCE'S SPY: 98



The Art of the Ruse


 ERINGER: THE ART OF THE RUSE

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PRINCESS CHARLENE'S NIGHTMARE



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On Retainer to Prince Albert of Monaco

October 2006

That evening I met two representatives from Poland’s Internal Security Agency. One of the two had spent five years in Brussels as liaison chief to NATO, which, he said, “Stands for *No Action, Talk Only.*”

We described our service and they described theirs.

The Poles were surprised by how advanced we were.

And it was true: we had one heck of an intelligence service operating in the Prince’s name, which we—and our partners—now outright referred to as the Monaco Intelligence Service, or by its acronym, M.I.S.

We’d struck gold badges and created identification cards for the principals, which the Prince signed.

People who understood the intelligence business were awed by what we had accomplished beneath the radar screen.

The Poles told me that at a recent Club of Berne meeting, its new chairman, an intelligence chief I knew, predicted to those assembled that intelligence services would eventually cease to exist due to 1) the Internet age of information access 2) media attention and 3) lawyers putting restraint on operations.

I differ with that analysis. Intelligence is one of the world’s oldest professions—number two behind prostitution—existing long before formalization by the likes of Sir Francis Walsingham and George Washington’s spymaster, Benjamin Tallmadge.

Information is power. The Internet is about quantity not quality, an overabundance of unproven data that begs this question:

*Does one want to be the most informed or the best informed?*

As for the media, having worked both sides of the information business, I found one could not generally trust journalists yet one could generally trust intelligence professionals. As an “insider,” using Monaco as the example, I knew that the media knew precious little of what was really going on—my own work as an example.

With regard to lawyers, the chairman nailed it.

Espionage by its very definition breaks the laws of any country it is used against. For lawyers, who have become ever present in recent years at the elbow of spymasters, to prevent their service from breaking laws is effectively to neuter their service.

My prediction is that future leaders will ignore established services and create new “unofficial” secret units that collect and analyze the intelligence needed for prudent decision-making.



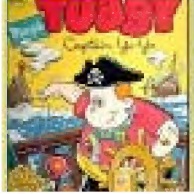
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One of the two Polish representatives was its service’s legal counsel. Thus, this was the first and only service, in any of our liaison partnerships, that demanded we route communication through SIGER, which existed officially.

As the Prince instructed, at nine in the morning on October 24th, I telephoned Madame Viale to arrange collection of the peace institute letter.

She did not know what I was talking about and patched me through to the Prince at Roc Agel.

He promised a signed letter at one o’clock.

His new instruction: Phone Madame Viale at noon.

When the clock struck twelve, I phoned Madame Viale.

She had no letter and still did not know what I was talking about.

Suffice to say, I left Monaco without a letter.

(A few weeks later, when de Massy tried to chase it up, the Prince apparently turned on him and snapped, “There won’t be a letter.” We have since speculated that Thierry Lacoste poisoned the Prince’s thinking on this issue.)

My Luxair flight to Luxembourg landed at 4:40.

Frank S stood on the tarmac to greet me, grab my luggage directly from the hold, and speed me through the VIP lounge to the Hotel Beaux Arts.

That evening, the Club of Luxembourg (named as such for the purposes of our first meeting) kicked off to a flying start over a long, sumptuous dinner in Le Bouquet Garni-St. Michel, hosted by Lux intel chief Marco M.

Godfrey S, chief of Malta’s intelligence service, graced us with his presence despite a disdain for foreign travel, and brought with him his operations chief. Godfrey listened to everything, spoke little, and observed everyone with eyes black as oil. Of all the intelligence chiefs I’d met, Godfrey won the award for the longest eye-grip; he could go a full minute before turning away.

Rene B of Liechtenstein completed the circle. (A few days earlier, said Rene, he’d taken a call from SICCFIN’s chief in Monaco asking why she hadn’t been invited to this meeting, implying that Andorra ignored us in solidarity with SICCFIN.)

Our club meeting next morning took place at a government conference center called Chateau de Senningen.

(“Once we get people to Senningen,” joked Marco, “no one is allowed to leave until the problem is solved.”)

We began—around a large conference table—with presentations of our services.

Luxembourg put on a slide show, the first image of which was a donkey in the air and the cart it led overturned. “This is the problem,” intoned Marco

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A ROLL OF THE DICE



M.

After my own presentation on the genesis of Monaco's intelligence service, Marco added words of support, adding that our joint operations worked very well.

I conveyed my experience with Andorra. One participant perceived that their involvement with us, should they change their stance, would be a risk to our collective. Another participant felt they should be given another opportunity to join our association. It was agreed that Marco should send them a fax: *We met, it went well, we shall continue, you're invited to the next one.*

(He did so. Andorra never replied.)

The Vatican, also, had not responded to Luxembourg's invitation. I would send them a similar message.

(Dr. Giani replied with an email blessing card.)

Iceland: We all agreed Iceland should be invited, that perhaps we should be a club of Europe's "small countries" rather than microstates. *The Misfits.*

San Marino: All agreed that San Marino should be contacted, cultivated and invited. I offered to handle this myself, expecting SISMI to affect an introduction, even though they kept putting me off, saying the time was not yet right.

Gibraltar: "We've already got the American," Marco joked, referring to me. "We don't want a Brit, too."

We agreed our club should meet three times a year; that I in Monaco would host the next meeting, mid-February, and call it the Club of Monaco on that occasion with a view to creating a permanent name thereafter.

One participant felt that when the services of large countries learned about our club they would ridicule it, "but then they'll become curious."

The point we would make to them, said another participant, is that we stand together against criticism about money laundering from the large countries, and turn it around on them: *We're all working together, effectively—what are YOU doing about money laundering?*

We agreed that our association should be based upon human chemistry; that though we would cultivate the "misfit" countries to join, we would have to like the service chiefs involved as a condition of inclusion, and same for their successors.

The key to our success, we all agreed, was to be asymmetrical and quirky. If anyone from other services should ask about our club, we would tongue-in-cheek explain it as a fine wine appreciation society.

And in fact, that evening we drove en masse to Ehnen, a village in Luxembourg's wine-producing region, for wine tasting at the Linden-Heinisch vineyard: Riesling, pino gris and pinot noir. This—the enjoyment of fine wine—would become a running theme as our club evolved.

It was past midnight when I finally crawled into bed—then crawled out five hours later to catch an early flight out.

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PUTIN'S U.S. PR FIRM: A FINE LINE

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